

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
-----151415Z 048283 /47

O P 151319Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 591  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 0918

EXDIS

JERUSALEM AND TEL AVIV FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, JO, PLO, XF  
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH MINISTER OF INFORMATION ADNAN ABU ODEH --  
PLO DIALOGUE

SUMMARY: MINISTER OF INFORMATION ADNAN ABU ODEH, WHO  
IS POLITICALLY EXPERIENCED PALESTINAIAN AND RESPONSIBLE  
FOR GOJ WEST BANK AFFAIRS, TOLD ME IN LONG DISCUSSION  
14 FEBRUARY THAT GOJ WANTS PLO AT GENEVA. HE BELIEVES  
PLO WOULD ACCEPT INVITATION AND TRY TO EXPUNGE "REFUGEE  
CLAUSE" FROM UNSC 242. ODEH THINKS KING HUSSEIN HAS  
POSITIVE VIEW OF HIS FUTURE ROLE IN EVENTS WHICH MAKES  
HIM READY TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITY (WHEN RIPE) TO HELP  
NEGOTIATE WEST BANK. KING REMAINS CAUTIOUS, HOWEVER,  
NOT TO BECOME ISOLATED FROM OTHER ARABS IN PROCESS.  
ODEH THINKS THOSE TWO INCLINATIONS OF KING CAN BE  
BALANCED AT GENEVA VIA FUNCTIONAL WORKING GROUPS  
AND HAVING UN ADMINISTER WEST BANK REFERENDUM. IN

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FRESH AND INTERESTING IDEA, ODEH SPECULATED PLO MAY HOPE ITS  
DIALOGUE WITH GOJ WILL LEAD TO SIMILAR OPENING TO A US-PLO  
DIALOGUE WHICH PLO MIGHT ACCEPT AS TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTE  
FOR GENEVA INVITATION. SUCH A MATCHMAKER ROLE FOR GOJ  
WOULD HELP REASSURE KING HUSSEIN ABOUT ANY USG CON-  
TACTS WITH PLO AND PERHAPS ALLOW GOJ TO SECURE PLO  
PRIOR ADHERENCE TO CERTAIN BASIC PREREQUISITES--

E.G., IMPLIED OR TACIT RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL AND UNSC 242 AND 338 (MINUS REFUGEE CLAUSE). THIS MIGHT ALSO BE WELCOMED BY SADAT AND ASAD AND, EVENTUALLY, INCREASE USG FLEXIBILITY RE US PUBLIC OPINION. ODEH, WHO IS KNOWN FOR HIS FORWARD AND OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF JORDAN'S ABILITY TO INFLUENCE PALESTINIAN EVENTS, EMPHASIZED THAT THESE IDEAS WERE HIS OWN, NOT GOJ'S. END SUMMARY.

1. ODEH ON FEBRUARY 14 NOTED THAT JORDAN WOULD STILL LIKE TO SEE PLO ATTEND GENEVA. IF OFFERED AN INVITATION, HE BELIEVES PLO WILL ACCEPT, COME TO GENEVA, AND SEEK TO EXPUNGE "REFUGEE CLAUSE" FROM UNSC RES. 242. HE THOUGHT ISSUE OF OPPOSITION TO RECOGNITION OF EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL ON PART OF PLO WAS NOT SERIOUS, BUT THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE SURE THAT THEY GET SOMETHING FOR IT IN RETURN.

2. KING PRESENTLY HAS A POSITIVE VIEW OF HIS ROLE IN EVENTS. HIS EMOTIONS, HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION AND SENSE OF SERVICE ALL LEAD HIM TO BE READY AT OPPORTUNE TIME (PERHAPS WHEN OTHER ARABS PUSH HIM, POSSIBLY STIMULATED BY HIS OWN ACTIONS) TO ASSUME A ROLE IN NEGOTIATING FOR THE WEST BANK. HE REMAINS DETERMINED, HOWEVER, NOT TO END UP BEING ISOLATED, DOUBLE-CROSSED AND BACK IN THE MIDDLE EAST DOG HOUSE, WHICH COULD HAPPEN IF HE GETS TOO FAR OUT AHEAD. HE MUST PROTECT HIMSELF BY USING THE ARAB DESIRE TO GET HIM BACK IN THE GAME AS LEVERAGE TO GET GUARANTEES  
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AGAINST FINDING HIMSELF OUT ALONE AND CUT OFF. FUNCTIONAL WORKING GROUPS COMBINING ALL THE ARABS ON MOST SUBJECTS AT GENEVA IS ONE SUCH WAY. ANOTHER IS TO TURN TERRITORIES OVER TO UN FOR DISPOSITION BY REFERENDUM.

3. MORE INTERESTING WAS ODEH'S SPECULATION THAT PLO MIGHT WANT FROM GOJ DIALOGUE JORDAN'S HELP IN STARTING A PLO DIALOGUE WITH THE US. ODEH PERSONALLY THINKS MANY OF THE PLO WOULD WELCOME A DIALOGUE WITH THE US IN LIEU OF GOING IMMEDIATELY TO GENEVA. THE OTHER ARABS WOULD FOR THE MOMENT REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS THERE POSSIBLY WITH SOME PALESTINIANS IN ONE OF THE OTHER DELEGATIONS. THE US IN ANY DIALOGUE MUST MAKE THE PLO SEE THAT THE ROAD TO GENEVA GOES THROUGH WASHINGTON.

4. KING HUSSEIN WOULD BE EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT A US DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO UNLESS IT GREW OUT OF

THE CURRENT PLO-GOJ DIALOGUE. THE US AND JORDAN SHOULD HAVE A COMMON STRATEGY HERE. ANY US-PLO DIALOGUE COULD LOGICALLY EVOLVE OUT OF JORDAN'S DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PLO, WHERE SOME OF THE BASIC PREREQUISITES (PLO RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST, 242 AND 338 LESS THE REFUGEE CLAUSE) MIGHT BE WORKED OUT BY HUSSEIN WITH THE PLO. THE US COULD POSSIBLY JOIN THE JOINT PLO-JORDAN DIALOGUE AND THEN DRIFT AWAY WITH THE PLO FROM THE JORDAN-PLO EFFORT. HE DID STRESS THE NEED TO KEEP HUSSEIN INFORMED AND INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS.

5. ODEH MADE THE POINT THAT SUCH AN APPROACH, A US DIALOGUE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR HAVING THE PLO GO TO GENEVA INITIALLY, WITH THE IDEA IN PART OF

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
-----151418Z 048046 /47

O P 151319Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 592  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE  
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EXDIS

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TESTING THEIR CREDENTIALS TO BE ADMITTED AT A LATER TIME, MIGHT HAVE SOME TACTICAL ADVANTAGES FOR SADAT AND ASAD. AFTER ALL, THEY PUSHED HUSSEIN AND THE PLO TOGETHER AND COULD TAKE THE CREDIT FOR GETTING THE US AND PLO TO TALK. JORDAN WOULD HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO STAY INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS, AND THE PLO WOULD BE MADE TO RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO MEET CERTAIN US IMPERATIVES BEFORE IT COULD GO TO THE CONFERENCE

TABLE.

6. FINALLY, WHILE THE ISRAELIS WOULD NOT LIKE A US DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO, THE FACT THAT JORDAN WAS INVOLVED AND IN FACT SPONSORING THE APPROACH MIGHT HELP, IF NOT WITH ISRAEL DIRECTLY, PERHAPS IN SOME SMALL WAY WITH THE US PUBLIC. (THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH A DIALOGUE COULD BE A TRIAL BALLON WITH THE US PUBLIC, IF THE IDEA OF EVENTUALLY INVITING THE PLO TO GENEVA IS INESCAPABLE.)

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FURTHERMORE, THE GENEVA NEGOTS COULD BEGIN AT LEAST WITHOUT THE THORNY TACTICAL PROBLEM OF THE PLO TO PLAGUE IT.

7. ODEH, WHO HAS A FORWARD AND OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF JORDAN'S ABILITY TO INFLUENCE PALESTINIAN EVENTS, MADE CLEAR HE WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY. I TOLD HIM AT THE SAME TIME I VALUED HIS IDEAS AND WOULD THINK ABOUT THEM, BUT THAT MY QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ON HIS THOUGHTS IN NO WAY SHOULD BE CONSTRUED AS ESPOUSAL OR APPROVAL. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD ENTIRELY AND HOPED WE COULD CONTINUE OUR DISCUSSIONS.

8. COMMENT: I DO NOT BELIEVE ODEH, WHO IS A PALESTINIAN WITH ORIGINAL AND CREATIVE APPROACH TO MIDDLE EAST ISSUES, WAS IN HIS REMARKS ON POSSIBLE US-JORDANIAN-PLO DIALOGUE SPEAKING FOR KING HUSSEIN OR THE GOJ, PARTICULARLY SINCE HIS REMARKS EMERGED AS HE DEVELOPED HIS OWN THOUGHTS IN OUR GENERAL CONVERSATION ON MIDDLE EAST MATTERS. AT THE SAME TIME, ODEH HAS ACCESS TO THE KING AND HIS IDEAS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY GET A HEARING.

9. ON THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR CONVERSATION, THE MOST INNOVATIVE AND ORIGINAL IDEAS CONCERNED A POSSIBLE US-PLO DIALOGUE AS A TRADE OFF FOR PLO NON-ATTENDANCE INITIALLY AT GENEVA. OUR INITIAL REACTIONS ARE THAT WE WOULD CERTAINLY NEED TO HAVE THE PLO ONE WAY OR ANOTHER MEET THE PREREQUISITES OF OUR OWN POSITION ON TALKING TO THEM. THEY MIGHT WELL, FOR REASONS OF THEIR OWN DISARRAY ON NEGOTIATIONS, FIND SUCH A DIALOGUE MORE CONGENIAL THAN GENEVA. WE SUSPECT ISRAELI REACTION WOULD BE SHARP. THEY WOULD NOT LIKE OUR STEPPING OUT AHEAD TO OPEN UP A DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO, RECOGNIZING IT MIGHT WELL BE A PRECURSOR TO INTRODUCING THE PLO INTO TALKS LATER. HOWEVER, THE

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IDEA STRUCK US AS INTERESTING ENOUGH TO FORWARD  
ON, ESPECIALLY SINCE, AS ODEH DESCRIBED IT, THE  
PROPOSAL TAKES CAREFUL ACCOUNT OF JORDANIAN SENSITIVITIES  
WHILE AT THE SAME TIME OPENS UP A WAY TO GET TO GENEVA  
WITHOUT THE PLO BEING THERE INITIALLY. OVER THE LONG TERM  
ITS VALUE, WE BELIEVE, HAS TO BE JUDGES AGAINST WHAT  
WE BELIEVE IS POSSIBLE IN TERMS OF THE WEST BANK.  
IF A PALESTINIAN WEST BANK WITH LINKS TO JORDAN, FOR  
EXAMPLE, IS IN THE REALM OF A POSSIBLE SOLUTION, SUCH AN  
APPROACH TO THE PLO MIGHT HAVE MERIT.  
END COMMENT.  
PICKERING

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## Message Attributes

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ADNAN ABU ODEH, W  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009